

Electronic Health Record Team Kicks Off with Interdisciplinary Training

Technology never stops growing, and automating health records is the goal of the ADPH electronic health record, known as EHR, that is targeted to be piloted February 2016.

"This is a monumental time for public health," Chris Haag, deputy director of the Bureau of Family Health Services, pronounced when convening an intensive three-day EHR training March 26 in Montgomery. "We're really excited to have a vendor, and we're going to need frank and direct input from staff. A lot of programs have to be plugged in."

State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson provided opening remarks to the employees and vendor trainers. He said, "If we're going to be competitive in a changing health care environment and interface with Alabama One Health Record, we'll need to capture time, be competitive, be able to build and transfer information, and share with others in order to demonstrate our outcomes."

Must-haves are an operational system that employees can use with speed and accuracy. Haag added that it is important to bring together people with expertise in billing and people in the clinic and their many commonalities.

"I know the challenge, because there are issues around efficiency and real world challenges from providers, nurses, doctors, and our



The voice of employees is important in developing Alabama's EHR. Some members of the EHR team gathered for this group photograph.

time will be short," Dr. Williamson said. "We must empower people to make the EHR function."

Leading the clinic charge is Laurie Stout, who is assisted in EHR operations by Arnita Shepherd. An invaluable member of the team is Dr. Claude Oiumet, a retired Jefferson County Department of Health leader who directed the successful EHR process there.

The vendor Netsmart and its project leader William Craft said that the team must learn about public health in Alabama and how its business process works. While some other vendors have experience with EHRs for hospitals and doctors' offices, Netsmart has real-world public health department experience.

The project's visions and goals include automating ADPH health records "to create visibility, efficiency and interoperability," and employees' voice, opinions and collective thoughts are important.

In preparation for the meeting, organizers Laurie Stout and Chris Haag spoke with program staff and other key players in the department to develop the EHR team. Although there are numerous work and users groups that will include all disciplines, this team will represent each clinical program or discipline for the duration of the project. The team will coordinate with other members of their programs as needed to complete assigned tasks. They provided detailed program-specific information at the kick-off and have provided feedback for materials sent to the vendor.

Members of the EHR Team are listed here:

EHR Team

Meredith Adams, Family Health Services/Care Coordination

Pam Barrett, Communicable Disease/TB Director

Debra Bradley, Butler County Health Department/Nursing

continued on page 4

Agencies Collaborate in Successful PPE Training

Panic that ensued after two nurses in Dallas contracted Ebola virus disease last fall underscores the seriousness and importance of correctly using personal protective equipment (PPE) to safeguard health care workers. Lessons have been learned from the outcomes associated with these cases.

Alabamians will be better prepared for such situations now that the Center for Emergency Preparedness has hosted a two-day PPE course for biological events. The first eight-hour training, Personal Protective Measures for Biological events (PPMB), was for the individual and the second day was a train-the-trainer piece. In addition to ADPH staff, various state agencies and private sector attendees participated in this training held April 21 -22 at the Alternate Emergency Operations Center in Montgomery.

Employers including the Alabama Department of Public Health are responsible for reducing risks by training their workers to use PPE properly. Operations Director Alice Floyd, B.S.N., R.N., COHN-S, stated that those who attended are expected to provide training for their agency and others, if applicable.

Instructors from the Federal Emergency Management Agency Center for Domestic Preparedness taught the 34 participants from throughout the state including professionals from every public health area, including Jefferson and Mobile counties.

Several firsts were noted with the course, Ms. Floyd said. Alabama had the honor of being selected to host this class from among 4,000 applicants. The Center for Domestic Preparedness tested its new app for registration. While there were a few kinks, the application was successful. Also, this was one of the first courses taught offsite as a nonresident meeting and the participants were the first group that was not from its own consortium.

In addition to representation from Public Health, attendees came from the Alabama Emergency

Management Agency; Alabama EMS Region I, Alabama Gulf EMS System, Birmingham Regional EMS System, East Alabama EMS, Southeast Alabama EMS, and Alabama EMS Region IV (West); Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA), DCH Regional Medical Center, Huntsville Hospital, the University of South Alabama Children's and Women's Hospital, the University of South Alabama Medical Center, and VA Medical Center, Birmingham.

Among the skills taught were the crucial importance of maintaining, donning and doffing PPE gear correctly. Repeated practice and observation are needed to prevent possible transmission of disease.

State Toxicologist Dr. John Guarisco of the Bureau of Communicable Disease had participated in an earlier training, but these sessions reinforced the knowledge and skills he had learned. He said, "Being able to provide the PPE training within the state adds to our emergency response capabilities."



Class members practiced donning personal protective equipment.

Alabama Department of Public Health

Mission

To serve the people of Alabama by assuring conditions in which they can be healthy.

Value Statement

The purpose of the Alabama Department of Public Health is to provide caring, high quality and professional services for the improvement and protection of the public's health through disease prevention and the assurance of public health services to resident and transient populations of the state regardless of social circumstances or the ability to pay.

The Department of Public Health works closely with the community to preserve and protect the public's health and to provide caring quality services.

Alabama's Health

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Public Health Provides Assistance at Historic Bridge Crossing Ceremony

The Selma Bridge Crossing Jubilee March 7-8 drew an immense, larger than expected crowd—with some estimating 80,000 people visited the city of 20,000. President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama and their family, Attorney General Eric Holder, and numerous other high-profile dignitaries including former President George Bush, came to honor the 50th anniversary of “Bloody Sunday.”

When it was learned that local resources were stretched so thin they would need assistance, public health nurses and a variety of other professionals were deployed to Selma. Logistics were important. Employees set up cots at the Dallas County Health Department for the nurses to spend Friday and Saturday nights.

On Saturday, speeches were delivered from a stage set up with the Edmund Pettus bridge serving as the backdrop. Thousands of people from around the nation and the world stood in the sun for hours in anticipation of the special event. Prior to the President’s speech, security personnel restricted onlookers’ access to liquids causing many to require first aid.

During their extended work days nurses from the county, area and central office frequently treated

people for ailments ranging from sunburns to dehydration. Emergency services were called to transport some individuals.

Many people praised the public health team and were very grateful for their assistance. “We could not have done it without their help,” Assistant Area Administrator Stacey Adams of Public Health Area 7 said. Nurses also thanked the local staff for their hospitality and looking after their needs.

Participants were honored for their service at the Nurse Appreciation and CEP Training May 8 in Montgomery (*see photo on page 16*). Dr. John Hankins was given special recognition for 10 years of service as state nursing director. His accomplishments have included standardizing training, coordinating medical needs shelters, training nurses administering H1N1 influenza vaccine, traveling to visit local health departments, encouraging individuals to return to school, and being a mentor who encourages nurses. He was also described as a “a compassionate nurse and a man of character and intelligence.”

Central Office nurses and area nursing directors were also honored. Individuals recognized

for their work in Selma included the following:

Stacey Adams
Brenda Anthony
Crystal Blackmon
Chris Caldwell
Denice S. Clark
Rosie Cunningham
Sandra Danzy
Thresa Dix
Ramona Dixon
Kaye Dunn
Jamey Durham
Barbara Etheridge
Joanne Gilliland
Debra Griffin
John Hankins
Antonio Hartwell
Tim Hatch
Ramona Hawkins
Leigh Ann Hixon
Windy Horton
Debbie Jones
Marilyn Knight
Karla Legg
Cynthia McAlpin
Peggy McGraw
Andy Mullins
Katherine Norris
Michelle Pugh
Ken Reid
Danna Strickland
John Strother
Rick Thomas
Sharon Wientjes
Kristy Wilkinson
Cathy Wright



Central Office nurses join the many county and area staff working long hours in Selma. Shown, left to right, are Sandra Danzy, Chris Caldwell, Debra Griffin, Joanne Gilliland, Sharon Wientjes and Ken Reid.



Public health nurses offered a wide range of first aid services to the throngs of people attending the celebration.

Bullock and Barbour County Health Departments in the News

The Bullock County Development Authority has approved granting five acres in Hicks Industrial Park in Union Springs as the site for a new health department building. The facility will replace the current older building downtown.

In Barbour County, Julie Andrews, R.N., Home Care Nursing Supervisor for Barbour, Bullock and Russell counties, and Josephine Forte, office manager, were pictured as they welcomed Connie King as the new Assistant Area Administrator at the Barbour County Health Department in Clayton. Ms. King has been with the department for 24 years and has served as an administrator for seven years.

Alabama Tobacco Quitline Celebrates 10 Years by Offering More NRT

The Alabama Tobacco Quitline is celebrating 10 years of helping state residents quit tobacco use by offering up to eight weeks of nicotine replacement therapy patches (NRT) to eligible callers, while supplies last.

The Quitline is a toll-free telephone coaching program that helps tobacco users quit with informational materials, a quit plan, coaching and NRT, all at no cost. Previously, the Quitline offered two weeks of NRT to eligible callers.

“The additional weeks of NRT should help more people quit,” said Karen Atkinson, Quitline manager. “Research shows that the combination of coaching and NRT can double the chances of a tobacco user quitting and staying quit.”

Since it began April 1, 2005, more than 145,000 calls have been made to Alabama’s Quitline. Callers dial 1-800 Quit Now (1-800-784-8669) to enroll in the program. Coaching is required to receive the NRT which is mailed to the user’s home every two weeks while participating in the program. Callers with certain medical conditions may be referred to their health care provider for NRT approval.

According to 2013 data from the North American Quitline Consortium, the Alabama Tobacco Quitline had the third highest quit rate among reporting quitlines. The Quitline is open seven days a week, from 6 a.m. to midnight. For those preferring electronic services, a website, QuitNowAlabama.com, is available. Mobile apps and text messaging are also available.

Some 21.5 percent of Alabama adults are smokers, according to the 2013 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. The rate is one of the highest in the nation.

For more information, contact Karen Atkinson, (334) 206-3825, or Julie Hare, public information director, (334) 206-3830.

EHR Team, continued from page 1

Kathie Burtram, Blount County Health Department/Nursing

Releshia Calhoun, Information Technology

Renae Carpenter, Professional and Support Services/Social Work

Valerie Cochran, Professional and Support Services/Nursing

Wendy Coleman, Elmore County Health Department/Clerical

Dawn Ellis, Family Health Services

Carl Evans, Communicable Disease/TB Area

Kimberly Gordon/Butler County Health Department/Care Coordination

Chris Haag, Family Health Services

Ramona Hawkins/PHA 1 Nursing Director

Belinda Hensley, Financial Services

Mike Hudgens, Communicable Disease/Immunization Registry

Debbie Jones, PHA 7/9 Clerical Director

Cindy Lesinger, Communicable Disease/Immunization Director

Elizabeth Nichols, Family Health Services/Nurse Practitioner

Katherine Norris, Family Health Services/Breast & Cervical Cancer

Agnes Oberkor, Communicable Disease/STD

Dr. Claude Ouimet, Family Health Services/EHR

Chaun Paulk, Family Health Services/Care Coordination

Kimberly Parker, Information Technology/Billing

Regina Patterson, Information Technology Director

Lisa Reeves, Communicable Disease/TB Area

Ravi Satya, Information Technology/Billing

Arnita Shepherd, Family Health Services

Laurie Stout, Family Health Services

Julie Till, Lowndes County Health Department/Nursing

Annie Vosel, Family Health Services/Family Planning

Jerry Young, Information Technology

Alabama Public Health Association Honors Outstanding Public Health Leaders

The Alabama Public Health Association recently recognized persons from across the state who have demonstrated exceptional merit during the past year in the field of public health. The following individuals were presented awards at the association's 59th Annual Meeting and Health Education Conference at the Embassy Suites in Montgomery April 9.



Sandra Blakely and Cathy Wright

nursing in Alabama, that is "to assure conditions in which individuals, families and communities can be healthy utilizing the unique expertise of public health nurses to assess, plan and implement programs which promote health and prevent disease."

Mrs. Wright has been a clinic nurse for nearly 25 years, and remarked that she is amazed that she is now seeing the fourth generation of health department patients. She is described as "a valued voice to her peers" and "a true example of selfless service to her patients, the agency and her community." In addition to her dedication on the job, she volunteers for other activities such as speaking to various groups and serving on the Hale County Children's Policy Council.



Dr. Bill Goetter

years; who has demonstrated efficiency, dedication and professionalism in delivery of public health services; and who has provided unselfish community services in areas unrelated to public health. Among

The Anne M. Smith Public Health Nurse of the Year Award was presented to **Cathy Wright, R.N.**, clinic nurse at the Hale County Health Department. The recipient of this award must exemplify the mission of public health

his many accomplishments, Dr. Goetter led the effort to establish the Alabama Free Clinic, a medical clinic in Baldwin County that offers free services to those who cannot afford health care. He worked with State Rep. Walter Penry who sponsored a bill providing liability protection to medical volunteers rendering uncompensated services that resulted in passage of a law. He met with local physicians, hospital administrators and others to form partnerships to staff the clinic, has been instrumental in its success, and still serves on its board of the first established free medical clinic in Alabama.

Nominators wrote that Dr. Goetter is "committed to making Baldwin County a healthier place to live," "his commitment and dedication are unsurpassed," and "he does not care who receives the credit" as he often serves behind the scenes.



The Alabama Free Clinic Board Members

Dr. Goetter was the major driving force in opening the **Alabama Free Clinic**, and under his leadership, AFC received the Dr. Ira L. Myers Award for Excellence in Public Health. This award was established in 1987 to honor Dr. Myers for his accomplishments by recognizing an individual, group or organization that, through excellence in work, has made a significant impact on some aspect of public health in Alabama.

AFC began offering services to the low income and indigent people in Baldwin County in 1995. For the first few years, AFC operated with a 100-member volunteer staff of clerks, nurses and physicians. Today, the AFC has three locations with a full-time director and two nurses. Physicians, nurses, hospitals and laboratories all donate their time, effort and services to meet the medical needs of AFC clients. AFC provided approximately \$750,000 in free medical treatment and services to the citizens of Baldwin County in 2014, served 1,228 patients, and provided nearly \$740,000 worth of prescription medication savings. AFC has recruited and expanded its services

continued on page 6

ALPHA Awards, continued from page 5

to include pulmonary diagnostics, perpetual care, wound care, dental care, and has laid the foundation for the launch of eye health/vision services—all at no charge to the clients.



Denise Pope

Public Health Area 7. The D.G. Gill Award was the first award established by the association and was done in 1967 to honor former State Health Officer Dr. D.G. Gill.

Mrs. Pope has devoted more than 30 years to serving WIC participants at both the clinic and area levels. Letters of support commended her for her dedication to her work. One remarked, “She is one of those special people that has the talent to do the behind-the-scenes work to make a project or meeting come together.” She has served as a subject matter expert for the WIC Crossroads Management Information System. This eight-year project involved collaboration with four states to design and develop an electronic WIC record that met the needs of the Alabama WIC program. Mrs. Pope worked countless hours on this project not only in the design phase, but also by piloting the project. She assisted with training and statewide implementation.

Over the years, Mrs. Pope has been involved in innovative ways to provide accessibility to the WIC program by those who need it most. Her area was one of the first to provide hospital-based WIC certifications, mobile WIC clinics, after hours clinics, and church-based WIC clinics. One supporter noted, “Mrs. Pope is truly a problem solver with compassion for the people she serves and for her colleagues with whom she shares a workplace. Mrs. Pope does not view her job to be just the nutrition director; she sees herself as a team player for the department.”

Noelle Ahmann, with the Communications and Social Marketing Division, Bureau of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease, was honored with the Virginia Kendrick Award. This award is given annually to an individual who has provided notable service to the people of Alabama while serving in a supportive

The D.G. Gill Award is intended to honor an individual who has made an exceptional contribution to public health in Alabama. The Alabama Public Health Association presented this award to **Denise Pope** of



Sandra Blakely and Noelle Ahmann

materials that are essential to assure people have the knowledge they need to be alert to public health issues, services, recommendations, requirements, and disease and injury prevention interventions. Supporters praised her for enabling others to do their jobs in promoting healthful behaviors to a wide range of audiences. Letters of support stated, “She is dedicated and works smoothly with others to balance the goals of programs with the communications methodologies that must be utilized in her work.”



Melissa Ann Morrison

position in the field of public health.

In her position as marketing specialist, Ms. Ahmann produces professional quality work that results in clear, informational, promotional and educational

Commander Melissa Ann Morrison was presented the Guy M. Tate Award, an award given annually to a public health employee, group or agency with 10 years or less in public health for outstanding current or recent service

or contribution to public health. CDR Morrison has had a substantial impact on the health and safety of Alabama’s citizens as she carries out her duties as a Career Epidemiology Field Officer with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention assigned to the Alabama Department of Public Health.

CDR Morrison began her current assignment in Alabama in May 2009 during the second week of the H1N1 influenza response. Since then, she has been involved in several joint federal and ADPH public health emergency responses, including investigation of health impacts of an extended weather-related water shortage, the Alabama tornado outbreak in April 2011, investigation of potential patient exposure to strontium, and assessment of community exposure to mercaptan. Most recently, she was responsible for coordinating ADPH Ebola planning efforts and was deployed to CDC headquarters to serve on the State Coordination Task Force.

continued on page 7

ALPHA Awards, continued from page 6

Two former association leaders and office holders were inducted into the Alabama Public Health Association Hall of Fame, Class of 2015: **Ross Hudson** of Scottsboro and **Albert Woolbright, Ph.D.**, of Montgomery. The Hall of Fame recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the enhancement and advancement of the association.



Ross Hudson



Albert Woolbright

BCL Celebrates π Day 2015

In observance of 3-14-15 - π Day, employees of the Bureau of Clinical Laboratories celebrated by bringing pies and other goodies to share with coworkers. The π /pie celebration began at 1:59:26 p.m. Pies of the homemade variety were judged by Allison Smith of the Bureau of Communicable Disease, Chris Sellers of the Bureau of Children's Health Insurance, and State Toxicologist Dr. John Guarisco. Pictured, left to right, are Ms. Smith, Sellers, Bureau of Clinical Laboratories Director Dr. Sharon Massingale, Dr. Guarisco and Ashley Megelin, the event coordinator. The five homemade entry winners were Nutty Pumpkin π - Best Tasting Pie, Butterscotch Pumpkin π - Most Original Pie, Layered Mexican π Dip-Best Pie Presentation, π Pretzel - Best Non-Pie Taste and π Cookie - Best Non-Pie Presentation.



ORC Physicists Train in Radiological Assessment Concepts



All radiation physicists from the Office of Radiation Control, including the director and assistant director, engaged in problem-solving sessions and a tabletop exercise as a part of a weeklong training course titled Radiological Accident Assessment Concepts. This course addressed the consequences of incidents involving radioactive materials. Emphasis was placed on incidents at commercial nuclear power plants. The intensive training included 15 hours of Web-based training prior to the 40 hours of classroom training, conducted at the RSA Tower March 16-20 and focused on the technical concepts involved in formulating protective action decisions.



Public Health Social Work Celebration and CEP Training Held

A group of 126 people attended the 2015 Public Health Social Work Celebration and CEP Training held March 20 in Montgomery during National Social Work Month. Attendees praised the excellent program offerings that included the following presentations on the full agenda.

- John Lowery, Strategic National Stockpile coordinator with the Center for Emergency Preparedness, moderated a panel discussion titled "A Multi-Disciplinary Perspective on Medical and Mental Health Issues in Shelters and PODS." Panelists provided guidance from their discipline's individual perspectives: Alice Floyd from the CEP planning, State Nursing Director John Hankins from public health nursing, Assistant Pharmacy director Nancy Bishop, and State Social Work Director Renae Carpenter.
- A moving presentation was made by Donnie Bynum, Superintendent of Dale County Schools, whose topic was "Preparing for Hostage Situations: Boy in the Bunker." Actual 9-1-1 calls after a 5-year-old boy was kidnapped and held captive for nearly a week were played.
- Retired State Social Work Director Maury West offered Do's and Don'ts of Crisis Communication During Disasters: Working Within the Culture of Mental Health.
- The day's program concluded with a helpful presentation by Timberly Williams, 2-1-1 Program Manager - Hands On River Region, titled "2-1-1 Connect: Linking Providers to Statewide Resources During Public Health Emergencies and Disasters."

Awards Presentation

Ms. Carpenter presented the outstanding area nominees and award recipients from across the state. A panel of judges evaluated the nominations without the individuals' names being known. Felicia Love of the Madison County Health Department was selected as Public Health Social Worker of the Year for 2015.

An Alabama Department of Public Health employee for seven years, nominators stated Ms. Love greets clients with a smile and a warm welcome and treats all with dignity and respect. Supporters describe her as friendly, cheerful, caring, compassionate, dedicated, committed and efficient. She goes above and beyond to help others. A team player, she assists in training new employees and supervising social work students.

Ms. Love participates in events that include the Liz Hurley Cancer Walk, HIV Awareness Day and Sickie Cell Walk. She is a member of Sole Sisters, an organization that promotes good health and exercise.



Terrina Harris, Area 2 Social Work Director, left, is shown with Felicia Love, Public Health Social Worker of the Year 2015, and Renae Carpenter, State Social Work director.



Shown at the Public Health Social Work celebration are, left to right: Renae Carpenter, Public Health Social Work Division director; Suzanne Terrell, Public Health Area IX Social Work Director; Peggy Lassitter, 2015 Social Work Manager of the Year, Baldwin County Health Department; and Ricky Elliott, Public Health Area IX Administrator.

Through her sorority she works with Manna House feeding the homeless, Christmas Charities, and back-to-school programs. She also mentors girls ages 12-18 and is a diligent advocate for cancer research.

Other characteristics used to describe Ms. Love include respectful, trustworthy, humble and selfless. Coworkers praise her for providing service with a smile and always seeing the best in people. Furthermore, she advocates for the underprivileged and works to give them a voice.

Peggy Lassitter of the Baldwin County Health Department was selected as the Alabama Public

continued on page 12

Alabamians Identify Top Health Issues To Address

Operating on the principle that more can be accomplished by working together with a common vision to improve health, the Alabama Department of Public Health began a process to seek input in identifying leading health care concerns in the state.

In early 2014 the department conducted a comprehensive community health assessment survey (CHA) of individuals, organizations, and selected interest groups. Local community interest group meetings were held to identify leading health care concerns to use in developing a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) for Alabama.

Leaders organized a CHIP Stakeholder Group, which first met in August 2014. Its purpose was to review the Alabama CHA; set priorities; and develop goals, objectives and action plans for the development of a statewide CHIP. The diverse stakeholder group represented 60 different organizations from across the state.

“The issues are driven by these stakeholders and partners,” Carolyn Bern, Alabama Primary Care Office Manager, said. “The process had an amazing, collaborative way of bringing in stakeholders. Improving health is a shared responsibility of health care providers, public health practitioners, and a wide variety of organizations and individuals that contribute to the well-being of our state.”

The partners and stakeholders agreed that not all of the health issues presented could be effectively addressed in a plan. The partners and stakeholders also concurred that the CHIP should focus on a consensus of the top three health care concerns based on the extent of need for improvement within the state, the chance of making a significant difference in the health of the state by implementing the plan, and the available resources and assets of stakeholders and partners to address the health care issue.

The stakeholders and partners participated in a Q-sort exercise led by UAB. Each stakeholder and partner took the 13 top health care concerns identified in the CHA and sorted the 13 issues into 5 categories. Fifty-one of the 60 participants submitted their Q-sort ranking. The results prioritized the following top three issues as focus areas for the CHIP:

- Access to Care
- Physical Activity and Nutrition
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Participants self-selected a workgroup from one of the three areas to begin developing goals, objectives

and action plans to address these critical health issues in Alabama. Additional information on assets and resources were gathered during the workgroup discussions. The ADPH took the workgroup recommendations and crafted draft CHIP plans for each of the three issues. The draft plans were sent to workgroup members with a follow-up conference call scheduled for further input and changes to draft objectives, goals, performance measures, partners and stakeholders; assets and resources; and alignment with national, state and local goals, objectives and measures.

In addition to other benefits, the CHIP will position the department to apply for national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). PHAB is the non-profit entity that oversees national public health department accreditation, a process that was launched on Sept. 14, 2011. The CHIP is an accreditation prerequisite.

The CHIP is still a work in progress. However, the workgroups are focused on the following broad goals/issues:

Priority Issue 1: Access to Care

Goal 1: Reduce Transportation Barriers to Health Care – identify transportation options by county, identify promising practices to support transportation to medical appointments, and close transportation service gaps.

Goal 2: Increase Access to Ambulatory Primary Care – increase the number of adults who think of one person as a personal physician, decrease the number of adults with no health insurance, increase the number of primary care clinicians in Alabama, and increase the utilization of telemedicine in rural and underserved areas.

Priority Issue 2: Nutrition and Physical Activity

Goal 1: Increase Physical Activity – expand and build on existing resources for community implementation.

Goal 2: Improve Access to Healthy Foods – focus on children and adults, farm-to-school programs, nutrition education, and healthy vending machines.

Priority Issue 3: Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Goal 1: Strengthen infrastructure for mental health promotion and substance abuse prevention.

Goal 2: Integrate mental health and primary care through cross-systems training and technical assistance addressing behavioral health promotion, quality improvement and behavioral health disorder prevention.

continued on page 12

Commendations

If you would like to praise employees for their accomplishments, send letters of commendation to the State Health Officer or the employee's supervisor and a copy by e-mail to Arrol.Sheehan@adph.state.al.us for inclusion in this list. Four items are needed: the employee's name, work unit, name of the person making the commendation, and his or her city and state.

Patsy Beasley
Leslie Britt
Financial Services
from Judy Smith
Decatur, Ala.

Samarria Dunson
Compliance and Ethics
Jamey Durham
Professional and
Support Services
Chris Haag
Family Health Services
Jennifer McNeel
Financial Services
Jeffrey Wright
Financial Services
from Belinda Hensley
Financial Services

Chrystal B. Foreman
Diane A. Mann
Health Provider Standards
from Sara Goolsby
Floral, Ala.

Sandra Daniels
Reginald Strickland
Center for
Health Statistics
from Teresa Green
Montgomery, Ala.

Sandra Daniels
Annette Johnson-Bell
Kay Mathews
Center for
Health Statistics
from Sharon Payne
Blondheim
Dothan, Ala.

Donna Furlong
Etowah County
Health Department
Customer wishes to
be anonymous

Chris Hall
Communications and
Marketing Division
from Anetha Robinson
Takenya Taylor
Montgomery, Ala.

Annette Nelson
Shelby County
Health Department
from J. Gibson
Pelham, Ala.

There's An App for Restaurant Inspection Scores

If you're on the road and trying to choose a restaurant, you can easily check how a restaurant complies with food establishment sanitation rules through a new app. The most recent Alabama Department of Public Health scores are easily available.

The version for Android can be found here: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.modernappsolutions.whatthehealthAL> and the version for iPhone can be found here <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/what-the-health-alabama/id953354039?mt=8>

Sheri Carlisle Receives the James H. Baker Exemplar Award for 2014

The James H. Baker Exemplar Award was established by State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson in 2004. This award is presented each year to a Division of TB Control staff member who best represents the standard of professional excellence and dedication to public health set by Jim Baker, a retired X-ray technician in the division who served for 40 years. The intent of the award is to foster excellence in public health by the annual nomination and selection of a TB control staff member who best reflects the "can do" attitude for which Baker is known.

In 2014, a TB outbreak in Public Health Area 7 forced Ms. Carlisle to work many long hours in difficult and often uncomfortable settings to provide direct care for multiple TB patients and conduct contact investigations. At the time, Ms. Carlisle was the only TB employee in Area 7 and the outbreak was 100 miles from her home and almost 50 miles from her base. She eventually gained the trust and respect of the community and has made great strides in preventing future cases of TB in that difficult population.

Jim Baker continues to be involved in the nomination and selection process. He was on hand to present the award, along with Dr. William Bailey, chairman of the TB Medical Advisory Council.



James H. (Jim) Baker, left, is pictured with Sheri Carlisle and Dr. William Bailey, chairman of the TB Medical Advisory Council.

Retirees

The following departmental employees have retired recently.

February

Pamela Farmer
Conecuh County
Health Department
Jane Gossett
Public Health Area 2
Sharon Jenkins
Immunization
Cassie Johnson
Health Statistics
Donna Little
Health Statistics
Sylvia Pope
Coffee County Health Department
Angelia Rackley
Houston County
Health Department
Nancy Register
Public Health Area 10
Charles Thomas
Professional and Support Services
Kimberly Weiler
Etowah County Health Department

March

Brenda Bridges
Public Health Area 3

Marguerite Coan

Public Health Area 1

Patricia Hammons

Public Health Area 2

Joyce Watkins

Blount County Health Department

April

Rita Gilbert

Public Health Area 2

William Knight

Information Technology

Melanie Lee

Monroe County Health Department

Marion Mahan

Public Health Area 9

Carol Norwood

Public Health Area 3

Amy Pressnell

Limestone County

Health Department

Kent Speigner

Emergency Preparedness

Albert Woolbright

Health Statistics

May

Phillip Dubose

Health Care Facilities

Judith Falkenberry

Wilcox County Health Department

Vickie Haynes

Dale County Health Department

Jana Kirkland

Houston County

Health Department

Patricia Lair

Health Care Facilities

Bertrum McElwaine

Clinical Laboratories

James Martin

Public Health Area 8

Janice Robbins

Public Health Area 7

Suzanne Southern

Colbert County Health Department

Patrice Williams

Public Health Area 6

Reginald Strickland Retires



Marie Hughes Retires with 50s Theme Party

In honor of the retirement of Marie Hughes, clerical director of Public Health Area 10, coworkers used a 1950s theme for her retirement party. Shown behind the wheel, and wearing 50s attire at the reception, are PHA 10 Nursing Director Pam Williams, PHA 10 Social Work Director Meg May and PHA 10 Office Manager Kathy Mobley.



In recognition of his 62 years of public service, including 28 years with the department, coworkers honored Reginald Strickland, M.S., M.P.A., deputy director of the Center for Health Statistics. His golf-themed reception on April 17 included representation from Berry College, his alma mater, and attendance by former colleagues and family members. His retirement was effective May 1.

Area Administrator James Martin Retires



Deputy Director for Program Operations Michele Jones presents a retirement certificate to Public Health Area 8 Administrator James R. Martin, capping off his 23 years of state service. Martin has served as acting administrator for Public Health Area 10. Among the many speakers wishing him well were Anita Archie representing the City of Montgomery, Donald Mims representing the Montgomery County Commission, and former Area 8 Administrator Bobby Bryan.

Social Work, continued from page 8

Health Social Work Manager of the Year for 2015. Keeping team members motivated and working together for a common goal is a unique ability of Mrs. Lassitter, according to her supporters. She is credited with playing a pivotal role in the overall success of the Ozanam Charitable Pharmacy Program that is unique to Escambia, Baldwin and Mobile counties.

Colleagues describe Mrs. Lassitter as a strong public health leader with a positive attitude and “a self starter” who teaches CPR classes to nurses and volunteers. After working many times in emergency shelters, both mass care and medical needs, she

Health Issues, continued from page 9

The stakeholder workgroups are refining specific objectives and performance measures related to the CHIP. National, state and local resources are also being identified for each objective. The final CHIP plan will be published June 30.

Anyone interested in participating in one of the CHIP workgroups is encouraged to contact Carolyn Bern at Carolyn.bern@adph.state.al.us, (334) 206-5226.

Acknowledgement of funding source:

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Crime Does Not Pay

On May 19, 2015, a former ADPH employee, Tamika Floyd, was sentenced to 87 months in federal prison after pleading guilty to wrongfully disclosing patient/client information from the Alabama Department of Public Health and the Alabama Department of Human Resources. Ms. Floyd's role was solely the collection and distribution of names, dates of birth, addresses and social security numbers. No evidence was presented to show that Ms. Floyd actually filed any false tax returns herself. Nonetheless, in addition to serving more than 7 years in federal prison, Ms. Floyd is also required to pay restitution in excess of \$3 million.

Some people see identity theft as a victimless crime. They may also feel that since they are only collecting and sharing data, that their role is minimal and therefore, they will not be severely punished. However, the federal government has learned that the way to

assumed the role of coordinator of the Baldwin County Medical Reserve Corps (BCMRC). Prior to her work, this organization did not exist.

Mrs. Lassitter took the initiative to seek grant opportunities, prepare, recruit partners and make plans to benefit BCMRC. Because of her work, the National Association of County and City Health Officials awarded two grants: the Challenge Award to establish breathing stations in shelters and a Capacity Building Award to provide assistance for children's disaster preparedness. She is also a dedicated employee, wife and mother.

Alabama Breastfeeding Committee Provides Educational Webinar

The Alabama Breastfeeding Committee (ABC) is a statewide body of health care professionals, educators, state health department representatives, and individuals from communities across the state that have a commitment to helping mothers and infants reach their breastfeeding goals.

The ABC received funding to provide breastfeeding education for health care providers. A three-hour webinar, Maximizing Breastfeeding Outcomes: How to Help Mother and Baby in the Outpatient Setting is available through the Alabama Public Health Training Network. The webinar can be accessed through <http://adph.org/alphntn/> in the on-demand viewing section.

If you would like more information about breastfeeding, please contact Michell Grainger at (334) 206-2921 or Michell.Grainger@adph.state.al.us

end identity theft is to go after the individuals that are providing the information. And when they catch them, they ensure that they suffer the consequences.

In each instance that ADPH finds that there was an intentional, wrongful disclosure of patient data we will seek to terminate that individual's employment and fully cooperate with state and federal investigations. To be clear, we will do everything possible to ensure that that individual is subject to both civil and criminal penalties. There is no excuse for this type of criminal behavior.

Since the discovery of Ms. Floyd's actions, ADPH has taken numerous steps to further protect patient data and restrict access where necessary. ADPH will not tolerate this type of criminal activity. Additional information on the case of Ms. Floyd can be found at www.adph.org/compliance. Please contact the Office of Compliance and Ethics with questions or to report suspicious activity.

More than 28,000 Alabamians Scale Back in 2015

Eighteen men and women from across the state won the grand prizes for teams in the cash prize drawing for Scale Back Alabama participants, and 40 additional people who had lost at least 10 pounds won individual prizes in the finale of Scale Back Alabama 2015. More than 28,000 Alabamians participated in the 10-week program that resulted in a total statewide weight loss of 79,942 pounds.

“Scale Back Alabama is a perfect example of how the public and private sector can harness their collective talents and resources to effect major change,” said Dr. Tom Miller, Chief Medical Officer of the Alabama Department of Public Health. “Alabama must curb the dangerous obesity trend if we are ever to have a healthy population; there are just too many harmful health side effects of being overweight.”

The Alabama program, sponsored by the Alabama Hospital Association, the Alabama Department of Public Health and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama, has become a model for the nation and has received numerous inquiries from other states.

“Scale Back Alabama encourages healthy weight loss from better eating and exercise habits,” said Rosemary Blackmon, executive vice president of the Alabama Hospital Association.

In addition, more than 150 schools participated in the contest, and three schools were drawn to receive nutrition and physical activity materials/equipment. Prize-winning schools drawn were Ider High School, Ider; Vestavia Hills Elementary School, Cahaba Heights; and Dora High School, Dora.

2015 Statistics

Number of local coordinators - 526

Total number of teams participating - 14,288

Number of individuals participating - 28,576

Number of teams on which each team member lost 10 pounds - 1,154

Number of individuals who lost at least 10 pounds - 4,140

Total pounds lost - 79,942



Shown are, left to right: Heidi Ramey, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama (BCBS); Sarah Foster, University of Alabama at Birmingham intern; Sophie Martin, BCBS; Amy Rauworth, National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability; Tom Miller, M.D., M.P.H., Chief Medical Officer; Teresa Fair, M.A., R.D., L.D., Coordinator; Molly Killman, M.S., R.D., L.D., Nutrition and Physical Activity Division director.

Department Enhances Quality Improvement Culture, Council Formed and Plan Made

How well are we in the Alabama Department of Public Health providing programs and services to the public we serve? The department is committed to continuous quality improvement of its programs, services, and operations and to enhancing a culture of quality within the organization. The Quality Improvement (QI) Council and the newly adopted QI Plan will offer tools and support for employees to be actively involved and committed to applying QI principles and tools in their daily work.

QI in public health has been defined as “the use of a deliberate and defined improvement process which is focused on activities that are responsive to community needs and improve population health incorporating lessons learned from evaluation.”

Engaging in continuous QI is expected at all levels across the department. The QI Plan outlines staff roles and responsibilities and these are the expectations of all employees:

- Develop an understanding of basic QI principles and tools through QI training.
- Identify areas for improvement and suggest potential QI project.
- Propose QI training needs to the QI Council.
- Apply QI principles and tools to daily work.
- Participate in QI projects.
- Contribute and adapt to change.

continued on page 14

Quality Improvement, continued from page 12

Beginning in August 2014, the QI Council participated in training and held several work sessions to draft and finalize the department's QI Plan. This 15-page plan, plus appendices, is a guidance document that supports the department's culture of quality. It meets a public health accreditation requirement and is aligned with the Community Health Assessment, the Community Health Improvement Plan, and the department's strategic plan to achieve departmental goals. The plan includes information about how the QI Council will support QI efforts throughout the department and how the effectiveness of the plan will be evaluated.

The department has adopted the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle of quality improvement. The four phases in the PDCA cycle are the following:

Plan: Identifying and analyzing the problem.

Do: Developing and testing a potential solution.

Check: Measuring how effective the test solution was, and analyzing whether it could be improved in any way.

Act: Implementing the improved solution fully.

The "Do" and "Check" phases are often repeated as the solution is refined, retested, and then refined and retested again.

PDCA is associated with W. Edwards Deming and refers to a continuous and ongoing effort to achieve measurable improvements in the quality of services and processes. The model is not new to ADPH. PDCA is being used in the department's Family Planning clinics to decrease patient wait times and increase patient count. It was also the model used by additional programs during Quality Improvement Train-the-Trainer sessions conducted for central office, area, and county staff in 2013-2014.



Robyn Peacock, Dr. Jim McVay, Carol Heier, William Kennedy and Nancy Wright view the Quality Improvement Plan. Doug Turnbull and others participated using Video Conferencing.

Core Concepts of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Defined

Quality is defined as meeting and/or exceeding the expectations of our customers.

Success is achieved through meeting the needs of those we serve.

Most problems are found in processes, not in people. CQI does not seek to blame, but rather to improve processes.

Unintended variation in processes can lead to unwanted variation in outcomes, and therefore we seek to reduce or eliminate unwanted variation.

It is possible to achieve continual improvement through small, incremental changes using the scientific method.

Continuous improvement is most effective when it becomes a natural part of the way everyday work is done.

The QI Council is planning the first steps to implement the QI Plan. A survey will be issued to bureau directors soon to collect information about the customer satisfaction feedback that is being collected throughout the department. This information will be used by the Council to identify some potential opportunities for improvement to address with QI. Also, a 10-question QI Maturity survey will be issued to all staff soon. Results of the survey will be used as a baseline measure of the department's culture of quality. The effectiveness of the QI plan will in part be measured by improvement of this score when the survey is reissued.

The QI Plan is posted on the QI webpage of the department's accreditation website at www.adph.org/accreditation. QI resources for staff will be posted on this site as they become available. The QI Council Lead is Jamey Durham, the Sponsor is Michele Jones, and the Facilitator is Carol Heier. Council members are Cathy Caldwell, Janice Cook, William Kennedy, Tammy Langlois, Jim McVay, Sabrina Nuckols, Robyn Peacock, Perry Snider, Doug Turnbull, Nancy Wright and Tammy Yager.

The plan will be revised and improved annually based on various progress reports, measures of the department's QI maturity, and lessons learned.

Acknowledgement of funding source:

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Tuscaloosa County Health Department Celebrates 100 Years of Service

The Tuscaloosa County Health Department kicked off Public Health Week 2015 with a centennial celebration on April 6. In January 1915, the Tuscaloosa County Health Department became only the second county health department organized in the state. It was charged with the duty to protect the health of the people of the community.

Tuscaloosa Mayor Walt Maddox, Tuscaloosa County Probate Judge Hardy McCollum, State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson, and retired departmental employees were among those who attended along with the public and news media representatives.

Public Health Area 3 Health Officer Dr. Albert White said public health is important in any local community, and noted the critical importance of the legacy of support received from elected officials at the local, state and national levels.

Staff members displayed photographs of events throughout the years and created a slide show. Dr. Williamson also presented a proclamation from Gov. Robert Bentley honoring the staff for all the work they do. The gubernatorial proclamation stated the following:

WHEREAS, during the past century the Tuscaloosa County Health Department has played an important role in preventing and controlling communicable diseases, ensuring environmental health, decreasing infant and maternal mortality, decreasing deaths from heart attack, stroke, and cancer, and developing a healthier county; and

WHEREAS, the Tuscaloosa County Health Department educates the public about the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and early detection of preventable health problems results in reduced rates of mortality from disease and injury; and public health professionals continue to develop effective initiatives to extend lives, respond to emerging health threats, and promote healthy choices; and

WHEREAS, the Tuscaloosa County Health Department, in conjunction with the Tuscaloosa County Diabetes Coalition, strives to improve the lives of Tuscaloosa residents at risk or affected by diabetes through community advocacy, education, awareness, and services; and

WHEREAS, the Alabama Personal Responsibility Education Program educates and equips youth to resist sexual risk behaviors and to make choices that

will promote better health and well-being as they mature into young adulthood; and

WHEREAS, the Tuscaloosa County Health Department promotes prevention and reduction of tobacco use, educates about the need for proper nutrition and increased physical activity, and violence reduction through prevention efforts; and

WHEREAS, the Tuscaloosa County Health Department promotes healthy equity in all programs and policies, increases community preparedness and resilience, links public health and health care system to collaboratively achieve improved health outcomes, develops and maintains strategic public and private partnerships that improve community health, develops and maintains an organizational culture of continuous quality improvement; and

WHEREAS, the centennial of the Tuscaloosa County Health Department is an appropriate occasion on which to recognize the achievements of this pioneer public health department.

Employees who helped make this special event possible included Area Administrator Tammy Yager, Renee Cole, Karen Crawford, Donna Richardson and Angie Shultz.

Other events this year will celebrate the accomplishments of public health over the past century in Tuscaloosa.



Area Health Officer Dr. Albert White, left, receives a gubernatorial proclamation from State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson.



Nurses deployed to the 50th Annual Bridge Crossing Jubilee in Selma were presented certificates at the Nurse Appreciation and CEP Training held May 8 during National Nurses Week. Area nursing directors were also honored at the special event.

Calendar of Events



June 4

Post Traumatic
Stress Disorder
Following All
Hazards Disasters,
10-11:30 a.m.

For more
information
contact Elana
Merriweather,
(334) 206-7980.



June 17

Caring for Patients
with Mental
Conditions in Home
Care, 2-4 p.m.

For more
information contact
Brenda Ray,
(334) 206-3867.



June 19

Men and HIV—
Start Talking
Alabama, noon-
1:30 p.m.

For more
information
contact Will Breur,
(205) 934-7140.



June 24

Tuberculosis
and Blood Borne
Pathogens for
Clinical Managers,
1-3 p.m.

For more
information
contact Thresa Dix,
(334) 206-3377.



June 25

Cervical Cancer
Screening and
Follow-up, 2-4 p.m.

For more
information contact
Kitty Norris,
(334) 206-6227.



July 2

ADPH Statewide
Staff Meeting,
3-4 p.m.

For more
information
contact Video
Communications,
(334) 206-5618.



July 14

Program
Evaluation
(Alabama EBPH),
10-11:30 a.m.

For more
information
contact Diane
Beeson,
(334) 206-5560.



July 16

Ethics for ADPH
Social Workers and
Nurses, 10-11 a.m.

For more
information contact
Rena Carpenter,
(334) 206-3383.



August 12

Home Health
Paraprofessional
Program, 2-4 p.m.

For more
information contact
Brenda Ray,
(334) 206-3867.



August 19

Home Health
Professional
Program, 2-4 p.m.

For more
information contact
Jackie Giddens,
(334) 206-5685.